

Another account that should be told to emphasize the bravery and dedication of these men was the one of Armando Lopez Estrada, a dark-haired, communications officer of the paratrooper battalion. He was one of the last in the group to retreat to the beach. He wanted to "hold until we die." Only when they ran out of ammunition for a second time and it was clear that no more was coming did Lopez Estrada, who was 20, let himself be convinced by his comrades that there was no point in waiting to be captured.

About a mile offshore, Lopez Estrada saw an empty sailboat. On the entire Giron beach, he counted 27 men. Stalin's tanks were machine-gunning them. Castro's artillery pounded in from overhead. In the distance, two American destroyers were moving away.

He swam toward the sailboat that was a 22 foot craft, 20 men reached the boat, followed by Castro's jets and their bullets. Frantically, they tried to move the boat by paddling with their hands. After 15 days at sea, 12 survivors were rescued by an American oiler, the rest of the men died of thirst and starvation.

The above account is but one of many which emphasize the bravery and patriotism of those men in Playa Giron on April 17, 1961. As a Member of Congress of Cuban descent I want to honor the memory of these men. On this April 17th, I join with the freedom-loving Americans in commemorating the death of these men who fought so that Cuba could be free and democratic and independent. May they not have died in vain.

INTRODUCTION OF LEGISLATION TO SIMPLIFY THE FORMULA UNDER WHICH SKI AREAS PAY RENTAL FEES TO THE UNITED STATES FOR THE USE OF NATIONAL FOREST LANDS

HON. DON YOUNG

OF ALASKA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 7, 1995

Mr. YOUNG of Alaska. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing legislation to simplify the formula under which ski areas pay rental fees to the United States for the use of national forest lands.

Nationwide, there are 132 ski areas on national forest land occupying 90,000 acres, or a mere one-twentieth of 1 percent of the National Forest System. For this use, the ski industry paid an estimated \$20 million in rental fees in 1994.

This new fee system passed the Senate during the 102d Congress but time ran out before the House could consider the legislation. At that time, a Congressional Budget Office review determined that the new fee system was revenue neutral to the United States. The new fee proposal is intended to return at least the same rental dollars to the U.S. Treasury as the current system created by the Forest Service. It will also guarantee increasing revenues in the future by utilizing ski area gross receipts as the measure for determining rental fees. Therefore, as ski area revenues grow, so will the return to the public for the use of those Federal lands.

Furthermore, this legislation will assist in meeting our goals of reducing the size of the Forest Service by eliminating significant management problems with their existing fee sys-

tem. The existing system is encompassed in approximately 40 pages of the Forest Service manual and handbook. The new system would change that by reducing the fee calculation to a simple formula based on gross revenue from clearly defined sources. This new system will greatly reduce bookkeeping and administrative tasks for both the Forest Service and the ski areas.

This bill enjoys bipartisan support and I hope others will join us in supporting this sensible and efficient proposal which provides fairness to ski areas and the United States regarding rental fees and, at the same time, helps to downsize the Federal Government. This bill is intended to serve as a starting point to begin debate on this issue. I hope to hold hearings on this proposal soon after the recess and anticipate reporting this legislation out of our committee quickly.

Mr. Speaker, I would also like to advise the House that I intend to consider a proposal for ski area permittees to purchase the Forest Service land on which they operate. Such a move toward privatization would further our goal of downsizing government and thus reduce the size of the Forest Service budget. If we are going to achieve these goals, we need to consider every aspect of Federal land management. Therefore, the committee is in the process of reviewing a proposal to sell certain ski areas on the National Forest System to the private entities that operate them. While we are developing this proposal, we will be hearing from those ski areas that want to purchase the Federal land they operate on as well as State governments, local governments, and others affected by this proposal.

Presently ski areas have permits from the Forest Service that allow them to operate for up to 40 years. The Forest Service reviewed these areas and designated them as recreation sites utilizing the NEPA process. There is no question that the intention of the Forest Service is to maintain these sites as ski areas and that no other use is intended. This further supports the need for us to review privatization of these lands now dedicated to this recreational use. Many of these sites have been permitted ski areas for 30 years or more. If we have private individuals prepared to purchase the Federal lands that they operate a ski area on, it is logical that we appraise that land and sell it to the operator and remove the Federal management responsibility.

The new fee system legislation that I have introduced today is a first step toward reducing Federal management responsibility and costs associated with ski areas on Federal land. However, I also intend to consider the next logical step of removing all Federal management and costs.

LEGISLATION ON BIF-SAIF ISSUES

HON. JOHN J. LaFALCE

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Friday, April 7, 1995

Mr. LaFALCE. Mr. Speaker, today I am introducing several bills designed to address the serious problems posed for the Savings Association Insurance Fund [SAIF] by the current onerous obligations placed on the thrift industry and the pending disparity between the pre-

miums paid by SAIF- and BIF-insured institutions.

The FDIC, other relevant regulators, the Treasury, and the GAO, in a report commissioned by myself and Senator D'AMATO, have now apprised the Congress quite clearly of the nature, extent, and urgency of the problem. It is my hope that these bills will now move the discussion along and allow us to focus more concretely on the specific requirements of a meaningful solution. There is a multiplicity of options. In my view, the right one is the one which can garner substantial bipartisan support in the near term. Taking no action is not a responsible course if we are to protect the integrity of the deposit insurance system.

There are three key problems: First, the SAIF is seriously undercapitalized just at the point it will newly have to assume responsibility for future thrift failures; second, the premium flow from existing thrifts will be insufficient to continue to pay the interest on the FICO bonds issued to cover the losses of the 1980's over the long term; and third, within the next few months, there will be a substantial premium disparity between BIF- and SAIF-insured institutions which could have a significant adverse impact on the now-healthy thrift industry.

The thrift industry is generally profitable, well-capitalized, and well-managed. But it is impossible for the thrifts alone to adequately capitalize their insurance fund and continue to pay interest on the FICO bonds issued to cover the losses of the 1980's without adverse effects on the industry and possibly depositors and taxpayers.

These problems are not the fault of current industry members who did not cause, and have worked hard to survive and help pay for, the industry problems of the 1980's. There are structural flaws in the mechanisms devised to deal with past problems. As a result, of the more that \$9 billion in assessment revenues from the thrifts paid between 1989 and 1994, only \$7 billion went into the SAIF. The balance was diverted to other uses, primarily to payment of the interest on the bonds.

Congress intended that the thrifts, through the bonding program and otherwise, pay as much of the cost of past industry losses as possible, in an effort to reduce taxpayer costs. That was appropriate. But the amount of the burden placed on the industry was based on certain assumptions which I argued at the time were overly optimistic and which have proved false. Most notably, deposit growth in the thrift industry was estimated at 6-7 percent. Instead, it has declined by 5 percent per year in recent years, reducing far below expectations the premium income which is relied on to pay SAIF and FICO.

There are three possible sources of funds which have been broached by the regulators to solve this problem: the thrifts; the BIF-insured institutions, either through a merger of the insurance funds or otherwise; and some portions of the moneys already authorized and appropriated to the RTC to cover past thrift losses, but which have not been expended. Some of my bills may be criticized as hitting the thrift industry too hard; some may be criticized as hitting the banks too hard. My concern is finding the proper balance to protect the depositor. The best solution may ultimately be one that distributes the pain to the maximum degree possible.